

*Opening of the Topes at the Caves of Kanari, near Bombay, and the relics found in them.* By DR. JAMES BIRD.

The Caves of Kanari, situated on the island of Salsette, and two miles beyond the village of Tulsi, are distant twenty miles from the fort of Bombay, and six from Tannah. The made road from Bombay conducts the visitor as far as the village of Vihar, four miles north of which is the mountain where the caves are excavated. They have been described by several travellers, and are noticed, in A. D. 399, by the Buddhist priest and pilgrim "Ea-Hian," who visited the seats of his religion in India, and whose travels have been translated by M. Remusat. The cavern temple is described by him to consist of five stories, each story containing numerous chambers or cells, cut out of the solid rock, and tenanted by Arhats; a description which answers very closely to the circumstances of the Kanari excavations, which rise from the base to the summit of the mountain in six stories, and are connected to each other by steps cut in the solid rock. The kingdom in which they are situated is said to be distant from Kia-shi or Varanasi, two hundred *yojans* to the south, and is called Ta-thsen Dach-chin.

Immediately in front of the large arched cave, and on a ledge of the mountain, some thirty or forty feet below, there are several small *Thopas*, or monumental receptacles for the bones of a Buddha, or Rahat, built of cut stone at the base. These were once of a pyramidal shape, but are now much dilapidated, and appear like a heap of stones. Several years ago I thought of opening some of them, in expectation of obtaining coins or other relics; but found no favorable opportunity until lately, when several lengthened visits, in company with Doctor Heddle, gave me the desired means of doing so. The success of General Ventura, M. Court, and others, in their search after relics from the *topes* of the Punjab and Kabul, gave me additional hope that I should find something worthy of the labour, and I am glad to report, that these expectations have not been disappointed.

The largest of the *topes* selected for examination, appeared to have been one time between twelve or sixteen feet in height. It was much di-

lapidated, and was penetrated from above to the base, which was built of cut stone. After digging to the level of the ground and clearing away the materials, the workmen came to a circular stone, hollow in the centre, and covered at the top by a piece of gypsum. This contained two small copper urns, in one of which were some ashes mixed with a ruby, a pearl, small pieces of gold, and a small gold box, containing a piece of cloth; in the other a silver box and some ashes were found. Two copper-plates containing legible inscriptions, in the *Lath*, or Cave character; accompanied the urns, and these, as far as I have yet been able to decypher them, inform us, that the persons buried here were of the Buddhist faith. The smaller of the copper-plates bears an inscription in two lines, the last part of which contains the Buddhist creed inscribed on the base of the Buddha image from Tirhut, and on the stone extracted from the *Tope* of *Sarnath*, near Benares; an excellent commentary on which will be found in Mr. Prinsep's Journal for March and April 1835. The last part of the Kanari inscription, and the copper-plate of which I have now the honor of laying before the members of your Society, corresponds very closely with the text of the inscription from Tirhut. The original in the *Lath* character stands thus :

Yé dhaurmáhetu prabhavá, tésham hétu Tathagatá suvacha Tésháncha  
yo nirodha évam Vádi Máhá Suwanna :  
which transferred to Devanagrí

येधर्महेतुप्रभवास्तेषांहेतुस्तथागतः । सूवाचतेषां निरोध एवं  
वादी महासूवर्णः ॥

may be translated :—“ Whatever meritorious acts proceed from cause, of these the source *Tathágata* (Buddha) has declared; the opposing principle of these the great One of exalted birth, has also demonstrated.’

The only difference between the text of the present inscription and the one from *Tirhut*, is the last word *Suwanna*, the *Pali* for *Suvarna* instead of *Sramana*; and which means the *golden one*, or *one of an exalted birth or tribe*, and is here evidently an appellative of *Bhuddha*. In the appendix to Mr. B. H. Hodgson's quotations in proof of his sketch of

Buddhism, one of the principal attributes of Adi Buddha is **सुवर्णवर्णता** *Suvarna-warnata*. The above sentence, as Mr. Hodgson remarks, contains the *confessio fidei* of the Buddhaist, and is in the mouth of every one at Kathmandu. The discovery of it at Kanari confirms an opinion long prevalent, that the cave temples of Western India are exclusively *Bauddha*, and seems to strengthen the theory regarding the origin of the *Déhgopes* of Kanari, *Manikyala*, and Afghanistan, that they are *Bauddha* Mausolea, built over the remains of persons of this faith, either of a royal or priestly character. Little doubt can exist of the ashes found in the two copper urns being those of the persons buried, one of whom, according to the larger copper inscription, was the chief of the great *Vihar*, or large arched temple at Kanari. The object of these monuments was, as Mr. Prinsep says, twofold: a memorial of the dead, and in honour of the deity, of which the enshrined saint was only a portion, and as legitimately entitled to be worshipped as the source from which he had emanated, and to which, according to their creed, he could after a life of virtuous penance and abstraction return. The monuments in the *Punjab* and *Cabul* appear to be consecrated tombs of a race of princes, who were of the Buddhaist faith; whose coins are inscribed on one side with Greek letters, and the other with those of Bactrian *Pali*, and whose tribe is called *Khoranon*. They were a Græco-Indo-Scythic race, mentioned by Marco Polo, and called by him *Karahunas*, a tribe of robbers who scoured the country, and plundered every thing within their reach.\*

I abstain now from offering any remarks on the general prevalence of the Buddhaist faith on this side of India, or its connexion with the worship of the sun, as my only object is to bring to notice the relics found at Kanari, and their similarity to those discovered in the Punjab.

\* Travels of Marco Polo by Marsden, page 86.

ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥

नमस्तर्वाज्ञाय ॥ कुरु कुरु का

रिपुं ३ ६ ७ ८ ९ १० ११ १२ १३ १४ १५ १६ १७ १८ १९ २० २१ २२ २३ २४ २५ २६ २७ २८ २९ ३० ३१ ३२ ३३ ३४ ३५ ३६ ३७ ३८ ३९ ४० ४१ ४२ ४३ ४४ ४५ ४६ ४७ ४८ ४९ ५० ५१ ५२ ५३ ५४ ५५ ५६ ५७ ५८ ५९ ६० ६१ ६२ ६३ ६४ ६५ ६६ ६७ ६८ ६९ ७० ७१ ७२ ७३ ७४ ७५ ७६ ७७ ७८ ७९ ८० ८१ ८२ ८३ ८४ ८५ ८६ ८७ ८८ ८९ ९० ९१ ९२ ९३ ९४ ९५ ९६ ९७ ९८ ९९ १००

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